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## V.—THE PARENTAGE OF JUVENAL.

The ancient biography appended to the Montpellier manuscript of Juvenal contains in its opening sentence an interesting and, if worthy of belief, not unimportant reference to the poet's father: Iunius Iuvenalis, libertini locupletis incertum filius an alumnus, ad mediam fere aetatem declamavit animi magis causa quam quod scholae se aut foro praepararet.<sup>1</sup> The statements here made, though ignored or rejected by some writers on Juvenal,<sup>2</sup> have been repeated again and again without qualification as unquestionable facts.<sup>3</sup> In the biography of a later period, discov-

<sup>1</sup> J. Dürr, *Das Leben Juvenals*, Ulm, 1888, S. 22, Vita I a.

Cf. I b: Iunius Iuvenalis, libertini locupletis incertum filius an alumnus, ex Aquinio Volscorum oppido oriundus temporibus Claudii Neronis, ad mediam fere aetatem declamavit animi magis causa quam quod scholae se aut foro praepararet;

II a: Iunius Iuvenalis Aquinas id est de Aquino oppido oriundus et natus, qui ad mediam fere aetatem satirice declamavit . . . ;

II c: Iuvenalis fuit Aquinas id est de Aquino oppido. Incertum est, an fuerit filius liberti locupletis an alumnus;

III a, b: Prima aetate siluit, ad mediam fere aetatem declamavit;

III c: Prima aetate tacuit, media vero declamavit temporibus Claudii Neronis imperatoris;

IV: . . . ad mediam fere aetatem declamavit;

V: M. Iunius Iuvenalis ex municipio Aquinati, ordinis ut fertur libertinorum, Romae literis operam dedit. Declamavit non mediocri fama, ut ipse scribit: "et nos consilium dedimus Syllae."

<sup>2</sup> Weidner, *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae*, 2. Aufl., Leipzig, 1889, S. x; Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Litteratur*, 2. Theil, München, 1892, S. 337 ff.; Ribbeck, *Geschichte der römischen Dichtung*, Bd. III, Stuttgart, 1892, S. 294.

<sup>3</sup> C. F. Hermann, *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Satirarum Libri Quinque*, Lipsiae, 1854 (Ed. Teub. 1883, p. viii); C. Synnerberg, *De Temporibus Vitae Carminumque D. Iunii Iuvenalis Rite Constituendis*, Helsingforsiae, 1866, p. 53 sq.; E. Strube, *De Rhetorica Iuvenalis Disciplina*, Brandenburg a. d. H., 1875, p. 1; D. Naguewski, *De Iuvenalis Vita Observationes*, Rigae, 1883, p. 65; Dürr, l. c., S. 11 f.; H. Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays*, second series, Oxford, 1895, p. 139; E. Hübner, *Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie*, 1889, No. 49, Sp. 1342; H. J. de Dompierre de Chaufepié, *De Titulo I. R. N. 4312 ad Iuvenalem Poetam Perperam Relato*, Hagae Comitum, 1889, p. 15; R. V. Tyrrell, *Latin Poetry*, Boston and New York, 1895, p. 237; L. Friedlaender, *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturarum Libri V*, Leipzig, 1895, Bd. I, S. 4.

ered and published within recent years by Dürr from a manuscript in the library of the Palazzo Barberini at Rome, while no allusion is made, as in the other memoirs, to the social condition of Juvenal's father, both parents as well as a sister are mentioned by name, Aquinum being designated as their native place: Iunius Iuvenalis Aquinas Iunio Iuvenale patre, matre vero Septumeleia ex Aquinati municipio Claudio Nerone et L. Antistio consulibus natus est. Sororem habuit Septumeleiam, quae Fuscino nupsit.<sup>1</sup> The judgment of Dürr, who accepts these explicit details as a remnant of genuine old tradition, has met with approval<sup>2</sup> and with dissent<sup>3</sup> on the part of eminent Juvenalian scholars. In no case, however, has the parentage of the satirist been made the subject of thorough investigation. A reexamination, accordingly, of the sources of our information concerning the poet's origin recommends itself as having an important bearing not only on our attitude toward the numerous biographies of Juvenal, the real character of which, in spite of the discussions of a century, is still in question, but also to some extent on our estimate of the poet himself.

The age and authorship of the first twelve biographies of Dürr's collection (the younger biography will be considered separately) have not been and perhaps never can be definitely determined. But whether the original life was composed at the same time as the oldest of the scholia and by the same author, or was an earlier or later production than that commentary; whether one of the lives is the basis of all the rest or was derived, together with the others or a part of them, from a still more ancient life which has not been preserved; what relation exists between these sketches and the supposed allusion of Sidonius Apollinaris to the banishment of Juvenal, and other similar questions, it is not necessary for our present purpose to decide. It can be shown more satisfactorily in other ways how much trustworthiness the memoirs have.

If at the outset we undertake to remove from them what could easily be inferred from the Satires, what is in conflict with known facts of history, what is made incredible by mutual contradiction, and what must be condemned on the ground of inherent improbability, even conservative criticism will permit the retention of but

<sup>1</sup> Dürr, S. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Hübner, l. c., Sp. 1341; Schanz, l. c., S. 339.

<sup>3</sup> Friedlaender, S. 15.

a fragment. Thus the various and conflicting accounts of the place to which the poet was banished destroy each other; the circumstance assigned as the cause of his banishment has been shown to be a myth,<sup>1</sup> so that no foundation is left for belief in the banishment at all<sup>2</sup>; what is said of the manner in which he made his first appearance as a satirist is an inseparable part of the same legend; and the statement regarding his age is a possible inference from his own words.<sup>3</sup>

And yet it is a commonly cherished belief that imbedded in this rubbish is a nucleus of truth handed down from the time of Juvenal independently of his poems. The rejection, however, of manifestly worthless elements brings into view as the only tangible support of such a belief the statements concerning Juvenal's parentage and practice of declamation. With these statements the theory of the kernel of truth must stand or fall.

A criterion for dealing with the residue in question is not difficult to find. The demonstrated character of all other matter in the biographies obviously demands that we accept no part as derived from reliable tradition unless it is something intrinsically probable which could not have been suggested by what Juvenal himself says and for the arbitrary fabrication of which no reason can be seen.<sup>4</sup> This, however, is not enough. We are bound to reject, not perhaps everything that lacks express corroboration in the Satires, but, at all events, whatever is not in complete harmony with the evidence which they contain.

Junius Juvenal, as the memoir runs, the son or foster son, it is uncertain which, of a rich freedman, declaimed till middle life for pleasure rather than because he was preparing himself for school or forum. The two thoughts of the sentence are logically as well as grammatically connected. It was his father's wealth that enabled him to devote so much time to rhetorical study merely to satisfy his bent. His circumstances were such that he was not obliged to look forward to the serious business of teaching or practising law. The implied relation between the two statements is intimate, and our confidence in the first will be confirmed or shaken by our judgment of the second.

<sup>1</sup> J. Vahlen, 'Juvenal und Paris,' *Sitzungsberichte der Berl. Akademie*, 1883, S. 1175 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Hübner, l. c., No. 50, Sp. 1374 ff.; Schanz, S. 339 f.

<sup>3</sup> Vahlen, l. c., S. 1190.

<sup>4</sup> Schanz, S. 339; Friedlaender, S. 4.

It is customary to point to the pronounced rhetorical character of much that Juvenal has written as proof of his long practice of declamation. The disposition of the subject-matter, the connection of the parts, the lack of unity, the commonplaces and examples, the abrupt digressions, the fullness of expression, the figures of speech, the strong colors, and other features of the Satires are passed in review and explained as the work of a poetical declaimer, a rhetorician from top to toe, whose writings show throughout that the ways and habits of the schools of rhetoric had become to him a second nature. The statement, to be sure, of Juvenal himself, that he attended a school of rhetoric (1, 15 sqq.), is abundantly corroborated. But what Juvenal says and what we read in the biography are widely different things. Assuming the correctness of the latter, we seek in vain a natural and satisfactory explanation of certain facts.

In depicting the inadequate remuneration of lawyers (7, 106 sqq.) he says that Aemilius, who lives in the pomp of wealth, will receive as large a fee as the law allows, and adds: *et melius nos egimus*. The pronoun, which the commentators leave unnoticed, should be understood of Juvenal alone, as in the similar allusion to his education (1, 15 sqq.):

*et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, et nos  
consilium dedimus Sullae, privatus ut altum  
dormiret.*

If it is taken in a broader sense, it must at the farthest be referred to a class to which Juvenal had belonged. That he was no longer a member of it is implied in the tone of the whole passage, and especially of the conclusion, in which he bids those who expect pay for their eloquence to betake themselves to Gaul or to Africa. He was, then, at one time an advocate of slender means. It was not as an outsider that he became so thoroughly acquainted with all the trials of a poor lawyer. It was the eloquent but struggling pleader of causes, not a poet or rhetorician, whom Martial described as anxiously visiting in his sweaty toga the palaces of the rich (12, 18) and to whom he applied that much vexed epithet *facundus* (7, 91), a term which Juvenal also uses of lawyers, with allusion, perhaps, to himself:

8, 48

*tamen ima plebe Quiritem  
facundum invenies, solet hic defendere causas  
nobilis indocti;*

7, 145

*rara in tenui facundia panno,*

designating, at any rate, a quality which he was conscious of possessing (*et melius nos egimus*). From the Epigrams in which Juvenal is mentioned by Martial, published about 91 A. D. and 100 A. D., it appears, in the light of what has been said, that Juvenal was a lawyer all the last decade of the first century and probably before that time—at least a decade before the publication of the first book of the *Satires*, with its allusion to an event of 100 A. D. (1, 47 sqq.). Of his straitened circumstances in this part of his career—it was subsequent acquisitions of one kind or another that brought him enough to make him comfortable and contented in later years—still other indications are not wanting. In describing the scenes connected with the distribution of the *sportula* (1, 99 sqq.) he may possibly not imply that he is himself a recipient of the favor,<sup>1</sup> yet he certainly does place himself in the same class with the poor people who must stand back till the rich are served. That Juvenal was poor has often been pointed out<sup>2</sup> on the basis of indirect evidence, which, indecisive by itself, is nevertheless strongly corroborative. His deep sympathy for the poor, to whom he devotes so much attention in the earlier *Satires*, and his full knowledge of their troubles are best understood as an outgrowth of his experience. He had himself suffered the ills from which he drew his philosophy of life (13, 20):

ducimus autem  
hos quoque felices, qui ferre incommoda vitae  
nec iactare iugum vita didicere magistra.

It is in the earliest *Satires* that Juvenal's touch with life is closest. He introduces himself at once as a keen and intensely interested observer of all that is going on in the great city. And he is not a mere looker-on, himself untouched. This man, whose first greeting to us is an outburst of indignation over what he sees, must have been for no inconsiderable time personally affected in some serious way by the life which he describes. In the earliest *Satires*, too, as every reader of Juvenal has noticed, the faulty rhetorical element, of which so much is wont to be made, is less conspicuous and offensive than elsewhere. The great difference between this part of his work and most of his later productions has found various explanations. We can not, indeed, but feel to some extent with the acute amputator of the

<sup>1</sup> Friedlaender, S. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Nettleship, p. 144; De Dompierre de Chaufepié, p. 27 sqq.; Friedlaender, S. 19.

poet, that we possess the writings of two Juvenals. That he tried at first to produce real works of art, but finally abandoned the futile effort and consciously surrendered himself to rhetorical mannerism,<sup>1</sup> and that his fire was but the blaze of rhetoric, and, being artificial, soon died down,<sup>2</sup> are views resting on the hypothesis that he was nothing but a rhetorician. From his change of manner may be drawn at least one certain conclusion: that in writing the first *Satires* he was decidedly less under the influence of the schools of rhetoric than later.

We have now, it is clear, the elements of a picture with which the Juvenal of the biography does not harmonize. The man who, in taking up his pen to castigate the vices of his time, came to his task with full knowledge gained by long personal contact with the world, who for ten years or more had been an advocate competent but handicapped by poverty, who as he assumed his new rôle had only a slur for the declamation of the schools and was far less under their universal influence than afterwards, when he had given vent to his wrath and accomplished, in the main, his original purpose—was not a gentleman of leisure, well-to-do and aimless, declaiming till middle life for self-gratification, and then turning directly from artificial themes and thoughts to the successful cultivation of satire. Beyond the simple fact stated by Juvenal himself, that he once practised declamation, there is not one word of truth in the statement of the biography: *ad mediam fere aetatem declamavit animi magis causa quam quod scholae se aut foro praepareret.*

A false notion of the rhetorical studies of Juvenal, due largely to the fictions of the biography, has led to an equally false judgment of his character, a judgment vitally connected with the subject under consideration. It is not strange that the indignation of a purposeless declaimer should be regarded as more or less artificial, that he should be suspected of insincerity, and that his plainness of speech, measured by the standards of a different age, should be taken as a sign of prurience. When, however, we recognize in Juvenal the lawyer who had studied, it is true, in the schools of rhetoric, but for the purpose of fitting himself for active life, and who, in following his chosen calling, had battled with untoward circumstances and unjust conditions, what he says has quite a different force. We hear him speak in the manner in

<sup>1</sup> Teuffel, *Studien und Charakteristiken*, Leipzig, 1889, S. 547.

<sup>2</sup> Schanz, S. 344 f.

which we should expect an advocate-poet to speak. We feel the genuineness of his indignation whether he is dealing with the present or with the past. We see before us a man who, in the spirit of an advocate, gives us one side of a picture, but whose sincerity and honesty we have no reason whatever to impugn.

Having cleared the way by our discussion of the account of Juvenal's rhetorical studies, we may approach the associated question of his relationship to a rich freedman. On the threshold of our inquiry attention is arrested by the form of statement employed in the memoir. The biographer admits that he is uncertain whether Juvenal was the man's son or foster son. It has been thought<sup>1</sup> that this admission points to a conscientious spirit on the part of the writer. The inference is charitable rather than plausible. We wonder why all traces of this remarkable scrupulosity are so conspicuously absent from the rest of the memoir, judging from which we have much greater reason to infer a wavering between two conjectures and lack of all definite information on the subject.

But dependence is not to be placed in divination. As before, it is only by recourse to the Satires that we can get solid ground beneath our feet. Fortunately, Juvenal has not left us in the dark concerning his sentiments toward rich freedmen. He has made this the most prominent type in his sketch of the company accustomed to gather at the rich man's door to receive the sportula. The patron bids his crier summon first the nobles, but a freedman blocks the way (1, 99 sqq.):

iubet a praecone vocari  
 ipsos Troiugenas, nam vexant limen et ipsi  
 nobiscum. 'da praetori, da deinde tribuno.'  
 sed libertinus prior est. 'prior' inquit 'ego adsum.  
 cur timeam dubitemve locum defendere, quamvis  
 natus ad Euphraten, molles quod in aure fenestrae  
 arguerint, licet ipse negem? sed quinque tabernae  
 quadringenta parant. quid confert purpura maior  
 optandum, si Laurenti custodit in agro  
 conductas Corvinus oves, ego possideo plus  
 Pallante et Licinis?' expectent ergo tribuni,  
 vincant divitiae, sacro ne cedat honori  
 nuper in hanc urbem pedibus qui venerat albis,  
 quandoquidem inter nos sanctissima divitiarum  
 maiestas, etsi funesta pecunia templo  
 nondum habitat, nullas nummorum ereximus aras.

<sup>1</sup> Dürer, S. 11.



Here Juvenal has taken pains, at the expense of symmetry and unity, to indicate by a detailed description his aversion for a class brought to the front by the power of wealth. That citizens of noble stock, that magistrates holding sacred office in the Roman state should be compelled to yield precedence to such persons offends him. And it is the class as such that he has in mind. He does not by a word assail the character of the freedman. Nor can we doubt his sincerity. He is not elaborating a theme of the schools, but introducing himself to the public in his first book, in which, if anywhere, he speaks from the heart.

What is set forth in a general way in the passage quoted is illustrated by particular instances. If there was a man in all the world whom Juvenal hated, it was Crispinus the rich freedman. And he hated him as a freedman. He does not mention him without reference to his Egyptian origin (1, 26 sq.; 4, 32 sq.). It is also not improbable that the rich upstart (1, 3; 10, 226), once his barber, and the gladiators and criers, whose very sons excited his displeasure (3, 153 sqq.), are to be referred to the same class. His hostility to the rich, whoever they were, is a matter of common observation.<sup>1</sup>

A clear conception of the fixed sentiments of a man like Juvenal furnishes a basis for criticism. Conceding to him, as we have, sincerity and honesty, we must also regard him as a man of honor and justice, who had Roman ideas with respect to social distinctions, but hated hypocrites (Sat. 2), and believed in a proper return for services rendered and favors received (Sat. 7). If, now, as we are told in the memoir, he was the son of a rich freedman, or the foster son, in which case he may have been a freedman himself,<sup>2</sup> we encounter the startling anomaly, that he looked with especial aversion upon the very class from which he sprang, or to which he belonged, and to a member of which he owed his education and, in the view of the biographer, easy circumstances for half his life. This can not be attributed to Juvenal. It will not suffice to say that he was ashamed of his birth and tried to conceal it. That might be true of a snob. But Juvenal has none of the characteristics of a snob. It is not permissible to cite as parallel the case of Horace, the son of a freedman, who makes a fierce attack upon a freedman (Epode 4). Horace has in mind a particular individual personally detestable (v. 11 sqq.). He nowhere attacks freedmen as a class. Nor can

<sup>1</sup> Friedlaender, S. 20 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Dürr, S. 12.

we entertain the view that Juvenal was the son or adopted son of a rich freedman, but, not having been provided for by his father,<sup>1</sup> had on that account reason for hating him and all freedmen. The fact that he received from his father an inheritance (6, 57) makes such a supposition anything but probable.

We have found what we should have been surprised not to find in a statement that is part and parcel of the story about the poet's declamation. We should have been still further surprised to have gained the conviction that Juvenal's father, a freedman of wealth, contrary to custom (3, 153) and human nature, instead of wishing the man who bore his name to enjoy as high a social position as possible, allowed him to carry on for years, without assistance, a losing fight with poverty, and finally bequeathed to him but an insignificant estate.<sup>2</sup>

But it has been maintained<sup>3</sup> that these statements, which we have rejected, bear the stamp of truth because they could not have been inferred from the Satires and because there is no conceivable reason why they should have been arbitrarily invented. And yet occasion enough for such inference and invention is easily discovered. It appears from the first Satire that Juvenal studied rhetoric in the schools (1, 15 sqq.) and that he had reached middle life at least (1, 25). The biographer, having no information of any military or professional career preceding that of satirist, inferred from this fact, it may be, and in a manner quite in keeping with his way of reasoning as revealed in the rest of the memoir, that Juvenal declaimed till middle life for pleasure. In that case he must have been in easy circumstances. Nothing more was needed to assign to him a rich father. But nothing was known about his father. It would follow, of course, that he was a nobody, perhaps a freedman. Had not Horace the satirist been a freedman's son? Had not the satirist Turnus been a freedman himself (Schol. ad 1, 20)? To be sure, he might just as well have been an adopted son. Between the two possibilities a decision was not made. Exactly this line of thought may not have been followed in detail, but that it was easy enough for the biographer to base his fancies on the subject-matter of the first Satire is manifest.

<sup>1</sup> De Dompierre de Chaufepié, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 6, 57 :

vivat Gabiis, ut vixit in agro,  
vivat Fidenis, et AGELLO cedo paterno.

<sup>3</sup> Friedlaender, S. 4.

The biography of younger date, betraying plainly its character, presents an easier problem. According to this biography the father, as we have seen, was named Junius Juvenal; the mother, Septumeleia. They were from Aquinum, and their son was born in the consulship of Claudius Nero and Lucius Antistius (55 A. D.). Dürr himself admits, what is quite evident, that almost everything in this life is invented or derived from the *Satires*, or taken from other sources and arbitrarily referred to Juvenal, and aptly concludes from the general tone and character of the production that it is the work of some humanist of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> To this extent the matter is not in controversy. The father's name also, it is plain, could have been transferred from that of the son. The name of the mother and sister, however, and the year of birth, it is thought, must have come from an old biography and had their source in good tradition. But first of all, though granting it as a remote possibility, we must nevertheless consider it strange that an old life containing these definite and important particulars should be in existence till the fifteenth century and not be known or used by any of the writers or revisers of the other lives. The chief characteristic of the memoir awakens still further suspicion. It shows clearly the tendency to designate by name all the prominent persons with whom Juvenal was in any way personally connected. In addition to his father, mother, sister, brother-in-law, and the consuls under whom he was born, are mentioned as his teachers or otherwise Probus of Berytus, Marcus Antonius Liberalis, Palaemon, Fronto, Lucius Gallus, and Volusius Bithynicus. That the *Satires*, Jerome, Martial, Macrobius or Gellius,<sup>2</sup> and the other lives furnish the material for these details is evident from the thought and expression. It is clear, too, that the writer, in seeking to connect Juvenal with these men, repeatedly states as a fact what is, as he must have been fully aware, an absolute falsification. Under such circumstances we are justified in surmising that what is said of Juvenal's mother and sister and the year of his birth may be of the same character. Only one thing stands in the way. It is declared that the date of birth harmonizes admirably with all else that we know of Juvenal's life,<sup>3</sup> though this has been denied,<sup>4</sup> and that nothing can be discovered in the *Satires* or elsewhere from which that date could have been inferred or which could have occasioned its adoption. But, in fact, it is not necessary to look far to discover what is

<sup>1</sup> Dürr, S. 29.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, S. 30.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, S. 30.<sup>4</sup> Friedlaender, S. 15.

amply sufficient to have suggested to the uncritical and unscrupulous author of the memoir those very consuls. The first Satire contains a reference to an event of the year 100 A. D. (1, 49 sq.). When writing that Satire, Juvenal had ceased to be a *iuvenis* (1, 25). The age of the *iuvenis* extended, according to Varro,<sup>1</sup> to the forty-fifth year, and, if Juvenal ceased to be a *iuvenis* in 100 A. D., which was apparently the unwarranted interpretation of the biographer, he was born in 55 A. D., in the consulship of Claudius Nero and Lucius Antistius. We do not know the source of the name Septumeleia. It may have been seen associated in some way with Aquinum. But without ascertaining how the writer came by it, we are compelled, by what we know of everything else in the memoir, to ascribe the use of this name also to combination or falsification.

By our examination, then, of the only parts of the biographies, older or younger, which have any appearance of being based on reliable tradition independent of the Satires, it has been shown that these parts are no more trustworthy than the rest. Nothing but blind credulity remains to support the theory of a kernel of truth. There is, indeed, an old nucleus in the memoirs, but it is a nucleus of old conjecture. The author of the original biography undertook to write a life of Juvenal in imitation, it seems, of Suetonius' lives of the poets. He did it, but his own conjectures and combinations furnished all his material. He had learned nothing at all from genuine tradition.

If we search, as we should, in Juvenal's own words for information concerning his parentage, we shall find again that in his settled views of men and things are plain hints for our guidance. It is involved in the conclusions which we have already reached that he was the son of freeborn parents. His strong antipathy to foreigners, whose presence in the city made it in his eyes well-nigh unbearable (3, 60 sqq.) and whose customs brought in by wealth had undermined the old Roman virtue (6, 298 sqq.), precludes the idea that he and his parents were other than Roman citizens. They did not, however, belong to the aristocracy. Juvenal, in what he says about the sportula (1, 99 sqq.), expressly distinguishes himself from the Roman nobles of old extraction, and in his imaginary conversation with the noble Rubellius (8, 39 sqq.) he makes the latter address him and those of similar descent as men of low birth, and in reply recounts the valuable

<sup>1</sup> Censorinus 14, 2.

services rendered by the plebs, leaving no room for doubt that he belongs to this class of citizens. The tone in general of his extended laudation of worth over against birth, in which this conversation occurs, points in the same direction. Aquinum, which Juvenal mentions as his native place (3, 319), was accordingly the home of his parents. That they had moderate means, but were not rich, we have already seen in our discussion of the son's education, inheritance, and professional career. The Satires, then, should be interpreted as the utterances of a thorough Roman of humble birth but proud of his Roman nationality, educated by his parents but not freed by their wealth from the necessity of taking, as soon as he was able, a serious part in the affairs of life.

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